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SUBJECT: FATA SECURITY UPDATE: SEPTEMBER 22-OCTOBER 12

Classified By: CDA Peter W. Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Introduction: This cable reports on security developments in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) between September 22 and October 13, as culled from press reports and conversations with post's interlocutors. The cable also lists cross-border activity from FATA and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) tracked by the Office of Defense Representative Pakistan (ODRP).

North Waziristan Jirga Agreement Update

[1](#)2. (SBU) The following incidents reported in open sources constitute violations of the September 5 jirga agreement between the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and North Waziristan Agency (NWA) tribal leaders.

"No parallel authority"

--The press reported that, on October 1, GOP officials closed a Taliban office that had opened September 27 near the Miran Shah bus station. Taliban leaders were reported as saying that they had opened the office to deal with lawlessness in the town.

--On October 1, "The Nation" reported that the Taliban had opened offices in Razmak and Mirali with the goal of stopping armed robberies and other crimes in NWA.

"No targeted killings"

--On September 22, multiple papers reported that assailants shot dead Wazir Khan, an Afghan, in NWA. Unnamed sources claimed the man had "spied for the U.S."

--The press also reported that, on September 28, authorities discovered the body of Malang Khan (or Malang Rahim Jan,) an Afghan from Khost province. A note attached to the body said the man had been killed for "spying for the U.S."

--The Nation reported on October 12 that the bodies of two men accused of spying for the U.S. were found in two different areas of Miran Shah. The paper said the Taliban had abducted the two men earlier in the week.

There were no developments of note during this period on other sections of the jirga agreement, including promises of no attacks on GOP government officials or buildings. Similarly, there were no reports of GOP failures to uphold their side of the agreement, including restitution payments to victims of collateral damage.

Jirga Agreement Enforcement

¶3. (SBU) On September 28, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) and tribal leaders announced establishment of a ten-member committee to monitor NWA jirga agreement implementation. The committee's stated objectives were serving as a "bridge" between the Utmanzai tribe and the GOP; ensuring implementation of the agreement; and acting against "individuals" not abiding by the agreement. On October 3, the Governor of NWFP asked tribal leaders to redouble their efforts to use the jirga mechanism to enforce the September 5 agreement.

¶4. (SBU) During an October 6 meeting with the press, President Musharaff expressed "satisfaction" over the improving situation in NWA.

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Cross-border Insurgency

¶5. (S) The Office of Defense Representative - Pakistan (ODRP) reported a significant increase in cross-border activity from FATA and NWFP to Afghanistan during the week of October 8 -15. The number of indirect fire attacks remained the same, but U.S. forces reported the highest frequency of enemy infiltration and direct fire contacts since the beginning of Ramadan (September 25-26). There was a spike in improvised explosive devices (IEDs) placed along the border. Anti-Coalition Militias (ACMs) placed IEDs beside the road used by Pak-Mil to attend a Coalition-Pak-Mil border flag meeting. ACMs also placed IEDs along supply routes. The majority of these attacks took place in the vicinity of Forward Operations Base (FOB) Tillman, across the border from NWA. Cross border activity, broken down by FATA agency/NWFP district included:

-- South Waziristan Agency (SWA): October 2-3 -- U.S. forces engaged two enemy foreign fighter sanctuaries directly on the border. October 9, 12 and 13 -- rockets fired on Forward Operations Base (FOB) Bermal from within Afghanistan near SWA.

-- NWA: October 1 and 3 -- Coalition vehicles were struck by IEDs in the area across from NWA. October 2 -- U.S. forces engaged seven (7) ACMs who were placing IEDs in area immediately adjacent to border with NWA. October 7 -- U.S. patrol received small arms fire and heavy machine gun fire on Afghan side of border. October 8 -- 10-15 ACMs with AK-47s and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) crossed border from NWA then returned to NWA following engagement with U.S. forces. October 11 and 12 -- in two separate incidents, 16-18 ACMs crossed border from NWA, fled back to NWA following engagement with U.S. forces.

-- Kurram Agency: October 6 -- A U.S. patrol came under small arms fire in the area across the border from Kurram.

-- Khyber Agency: Oct 10 -- Rockets were fired at Camp

Torkham from the Khyber Agency.

-- Dir/Chitral District, NWFP: October 1 -- U.S. forces observed and engaged 3-5 ACMs with weapons and packs moving along border. October 3 -- Operation Buzzard took small arms fire and engaged ACMs with small arms fire and mortars 1.5 kilometers from Pakistan border. October 5 -- joint patrol engaged by ACM small arms fire from vicinity of known ACM safe house on Pak-Afghan border.

Dissension in Taliban Ranks?

¶6. (C) An Embassy contact in South Waziristan Agency (SWA) reported that Uzbek fighters forced to leave NWA after the September 5 jirga agreement now feared they could eventually lose their sanctuary in SWA and were willing to "fight for their survival" if necessary. The newspapers "Dawn" and "Daily Times" both reported clashes in SWA between Taliban who were opposed to foreign fighters remaining in the Waziristan agencies and those who had alliances with foreign fighters, mainly Uzbeks. The papers reported an IED attack on Khanan Wazir, the amir (local Taliban leader) in Shakakai. (Wazir opposes the influence of foreigners in Waziristan.) Several days later, the papers reported that, while Wazir was still in hospital, militants killed two of his supporters and injured three others. Post contacted other journalists covering the FATA who confirmed these stories. Meanwhile, in early October, the son of Uzbek commander Jaffar Assad was found in Wana, SWA, strangled to death.

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Non - FATA militants

¶7. (C) Several Pakistani papers carried stories in late September about young men from the NWFP proper (i.e., from the province's settled districts, not from FATA) who had been killed in fighting in Afghanistan. The stories echoed fears GOP officials have expressed to post: if Taliban and other militants in FATA are not brought under control, their extremist ideology could spread into NWFP and then into other parts of Pakistan. Examples of what would be a worrisome trend include:

-- Qari Fazle Amin, a young man from a village 25 kilometers from Peshawar, died as a suicide bomber in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. (News of his death reached his village September 17.)

--Of seven bodies returned to SWA from Afghanistan in late September, four were of militants from Charsadda, NWFP. Of the other three, two were Tajiks and one a Waziri.

-- An Embassy contact in SWA told post that he had recently seen new Taliban recruits in his area who were from from settled areas of NWFP, as well as from parts of Punjab and Sindh.

Sectarian Violence

¶8. (SBU) A long simmering Sunni/Shi'a feud over access to the Mian Anwar Shah shrine in Orakzai Agency turned into full scale violence on October 3. By the time a jirga-brokered ceasefire went into effect on October 9, the official death toll was 29, though locals claimed 54 people had died in the fighting. Some locals indirectly blamed the Taliban, who in 2000 voided a long-standing British agreement that granted Shi'as access to the shrine. (Additional details on sectarian conflicts will be reported septel by AmConsul Peshawar.)

Comment

19. (S) While NWA appears to be quieter internally than prior to the June ceasefire and September jirga agreement, the uptick in cross-border attacks is troubling. As post has emphasized to the GOP, the true proof of the agreement's efficacy will be if attacks on coalition forces decrease in the NWA area. Meanwhile, the recent sectarian violence highlights again both the large number of weapons in the area and the power of religious extremists in FATA. End Comment.

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